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THE AUTHOR

RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATES HIS LITTLE BOOK

TO THE

CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AND TO ANY OTHERS WHO MAY READ IT.

J. S., *Lulbrook Rectory*,

June, 1890.

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PREFACE.

THERE is no need for a long preface to this little book: its title denotes its contents, and, possibly, may betray its tenor. It gives the Author's recollections of his Curates.

If, occasionally, Rectors be found wanting in their attitude towards their Curates, it is at least as true that Curates may, sometimes, be very provoking to their Rectors.

The Author has had a considerable experience of both Rectors and Curates; he rejoices to be able to state that he has observed, generally speaking, a harmony of feeling existing between the Beneficed Clergyman and his lieutenant; one object which he has in view is to point out how, on the part of Curates, this harmony may be weakened.

He is also aware that earnest, spiritually-minded Curates are to be found in the different departments of theological opinion. But each department may present its undesirable idiosyncrasy. Hence one design, in the following pages, is so to arrange the subjects that there may be seen—in Mr. Slimmer some of the Low Church, in Mr. Rashleigh some of the Broad Church, and in Mr. Maypole some of the High Church failings. Mr. Parchment and Mr. Verity are exceptional cases.

One word is sufficient to express a strong bond of union between men engaged in the great work of the Priesthood—

"REALITY."

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My Curates.

CHAPTER I.

PREFATORY—ABOUT MYSELF.

"Et mihi res, non me rebus, subjungere conor."

Horace.

IN some respects I may compare myself to Cincinnatus, who, in his old age, was called from the plough to do battle for his country. I am aware that the great Roman commander has been utilised in this way before now. Some years since, for instance, Punch's cartoon depicted Mr. Gladstone as England's Cincinnatus, called—not from the plough—but from the tree-felling axe to resume his seat as head of the Government.

Notwithstanding the savouring of plagiarism, I liken myself to Cincinnatus. He was of a retiring disposition—so am I. He loved the country—so do I. In his earlier years he was a public man; as age advanced he retreated to the quiet of his

farm; here his peacefulness was disturbed, and once more he figured in public.

In earlier life I was not exactly a public man, although some of my thoughts were made public; I was a scribbler on a small scale. In the mellow period, when one scarcely knows whether to call himself middle-aged or an old man, I accepted a country living, where I now tend my roses in the garden, and my flock in the parish. Once more I retake my pen to write, not a sermon, but a book.

There is something very formidable about beginning to write a book. I promise, however, that it will not be a very long one. For such a work, even granting the capacity, I have not the time. My little book will be, for the most part, a description of my Curates; and of these I shall give special prominence to my fellow-helpers who worked with me while I held the important living of S. Peter's, in the large country town of Mulworth.

Talking of Cincinnatus and his plough reminds me of a pathetic little incident which I witnessed last hunting season. It will serve as a simile; I find that one gets fond of using rural similes in the country.

James, my man-of-all-work, was ploughing part of the glebe land with a couple of horses; one a

cart-horse which I had borrowed from Farmer Jones, the other my old gig-mare, who is a well-bred animal, and was a hunter years ago. A fox, followed not long after by a pack of hounds in full cry, and a company of red-coats, passed through the field—

"Id clamor et agmine facto
Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum"—

The earth shook, whips cracked, the tally-ho resounded, the blast of the horn shrieked out. It was an exhilarating sight, and James pulled up to have a look. But the pathetic part was this—while the cart-horse tried to nip a chance tuft of herbage, my dear old mare Alice became quite excited. She thrust her ears forward, and strained her eyes with a long wistful look at the passing throng. She whinnied and neighed, as if craving for yet another run on the open.

The little incident quite affected me, and I found myself meditating how many of us old men resemble in disposition my mare Alice!

But for my simile. The huntsman's horn, which awakens within me recollections of other days, and kindles a fitful glow of earlier energy, is a little book which I have just been reading. It is entitled "My Rectors, by a Quondam Curate;" it has stirred me; I shake off the yoke of age; I shut myself up in my study; I take my pen, and launch

out once more into the arena which has witnessed so many victories and defeats—the chequered arena of print.

Cincinnatus—to refer to him for the third and last time—is reported to have said to his wife as he started for Rome, "I fear, Racilia, our little field must remain this year unsown." A similar fear might be mine. My little field is my parish; there is seed to be sown there in truth, and there may be the apprehension lest a flitting backward of the memory into the past should interfere with one's ever-present duty. However, if I can finish my book as quickly as Cincinnatus finished the Æquians, the ground upon which I work will not remain neglected long.

For a little while I shall follow "A Quondam Curate's" lead. I shall imitate his example, and say something about myself. That something will be little. My personal history has been an uneventful one—that is, if it can be said that the history of any person, however insignificant, is really so. Whatever interest it might possess for the general public consists in the parishes and people with which it has been connected. And in this it resembles the history of many another country clergyman; indeed in the majority of cases the English clergyman's life is a quiet, uneventful one; of course it has its throbs and pulsations, but they are mostly

caused by the cares and concerns of his calling.

As I claim to be no extraordinary person, but, like Jacob of old, a plain man, although not exactly a dweller in tents, so I will take no extraordinary pseudonym, but the plain one of John Smith. I present my card—Rev. John Smith, Lulbrook Rectory, Stirbridge.

After taking my degree at Oxford, I proceeded in the usual way to obtain a Curacy. I spoke to some clerical acquaintances on the subject, I advertised, and looked out for advertisements.

And here I would say a few words on the topic of advertising. What objection, unless it be a merely sentimental one, can be urged against a clergyman advertising in a clerical paper? Is it more derogatory to his dignity than advertising in a daily paper is derogatory to the dignity of Jeames or Chawles? Indeed one may perceive a distinct advantage in the custom of advertising for either a Curate or a Curacy. It gives a wider area from which Rector or Curate may make his choice, and so it affords a greater probability that either or both will arrive at a fitting conclusion. If a Curate-dispensing committee were formed, what would be the result? This committee, very likely, would know nothing about the Rectors and their requirements, and little or nothing about the Curates and their qualifications. So if mistakes are already made, they would only

be increased and magnified were we to give up advertising.

And besides this, as the inclinations of Rectors and Curates could not well be consulted, the probability is that in many cases both would be dissatisfied. The Curate would be reduced to a machine, packed off anywhere at the will of the committee; and the Rector might be saddled with a machine which he could not work. Why in these things, as in most others, we ought to decide by our common sense. If the Church of England leaves a margin for the action of reason in matters of faith, so in matters of work she leaves a margin for discretion.

However, I obtained a Curacy by means of an advertisement, and was well satisfied with my Rector, and I have reason to believe that he was satisfied with me. Of course we had, occasionally, little differences of opinion, theological disputings and such like. They but added to our zest, they did not interfere with deference and respect. Even as a pie is savoured by pepper, so is life improved by amicable disputation.

It is not my purpose to dwell on this period of my life. Altogether I worked for seven years in the capacity of Curate, for three years in one parish and four in another. I look back with pleasure to those days, and am deeply grateful for the wholesome advice which I received from both my Rectors,

and which was given with the simple view of training a young disciple, of necessity rather inexperienced, in the work of the ministry.

My stipend was about the average; though not large, it was sufficient for the necessaries of life. In prospect of my usual annual holiday, I made preparations for its enjoyment by occasionally writing for a country town paper, the editor of which paid me half a guinea for each of my contributions.

And here I would mention that many Curates are by no means anxious to exchange their status for that of Incumbent of a small living. The Curate is, in many respects, the more independent; he has few calls on his purse, while the Incumbent has many; and the sense of parochial responsibility falls much more heavily on Incumbent than on Curate. Besides this, I am aware that not a few young men in Holy Orders have refused livings on principle, deeming it their duty to remain Curates for a term of at least ten years.

At the age of thirty I accepted a small living in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of our Cathedral. After some years, the parish of S. Peter's, Mulworth, was presented to me. From this I have retired to my present Cure, which is in the gift of our Bishop. For him I have a sincere regard, and I think it but proper and courteous to address him as "My Lord." Why should I not? It is a customary mode of

address, and a term of respect due to the chief Pastor of the Diocese. The title is given to Roman Catholic prelates out of deference to the office of Bishop; so that, apart from legal arguments or Parliamentary considerations, there need be no qualms of conscience in using the phrase. And if we come to derivations, what is the meaning of "Lord" but "bread-dispenser?" Surely such is a most applicable designation for a Bishop.

Of course, there can be a lavish overplus in the use of the expression, which savours of obsequiousness as well as pleonasm. For example, when dining lately with our Bishop, I heard a New Zealand Missionary say, "My Lord, what is your Lordship's opinion of the Bill your Lordship is introducing into Convocation?" Nobody disliked the redundancy more than did the Bishop himself. The question reminded me—for alas! profane thoughts will beset us—of the eighteenth clause in the Athanasian Creed.

Like most elderly men, I find that I am easily tempted into digression. My excuse is that I have really very little to say about myself. It is, however, right that I should state my theological opinions. In these I may be accepted as a fair example of the ordinary beneficed clergyman. I am not extreme, and I wish to be liberal. If a man be in earnest, I have ever considered that his opinions (if they be within the boundaries of orthodoxy) are of minor importance.

With regard to my Penates, I have but to say that I am married. Although I did not, like the Vicar of Wakefield, choose my wife as she did her wedding gown, still she is possessed of such qualities as wear well. She is a kind, motherly woman; she likes young men, for they remind her of our eldest son who is on a ranch in America. We have always wished to treat our Curates as our equals and on terms of intimacy. They have been expected to come, as a matter of course, to dinner and supper on Sunday, and could drop in at any other time and be welcomed.

Having been a Curate myself, I am in sympathy with them. If at times I have tendered my counsel to them, on the other hand I have been ready to receive from them any suggestions which might be serviceable to the spiritual welfare of the parish. If I found fault with them there is little doubt that they had reason to find fault with me. We clergy, beneficed or unbeneficed, are, like other men, "compassed with infirmity." I claim to be no exception to the rule. Still I maintain that, taking us all round, we Rectors and Vicars of England will compare favourably with the members of other professions in those endowments of mind and deportment which should regulate a man's conduct as a Christian.

For the present I have said enough about myself as an introduction to my readers. I now turn to

my Curates. In describing them, I may be guilty of a species of anachronism; that is to say, they may not have been with me in the same order in which they appear in this book. It must be understood that other Curates, who will not be mentioned, may have filled in certain *interregna* or pauses of silence. But for convenience sake I shall head the chapters as if those of whom I write came in the specified order.

CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST CURATE—THE REV. SAMPSON SLIMMER.

"Ceux qui parlent beaucoup ne disent jamais rien."

Boileau.

"Ibit eo quo vis qui zonam perdidit."

Horace.

AFTER some debating with myself on the circumstances of the parish of S. Peter's, Mulworth, and the character of my parishioners, I concluded that it would be desirable to gain the services of what is termed a popular preacher.

Not that I am in favour of clergymen seeking after popularity, or of people going to Church for the purpose of doing homage to an individual preacher. Such would, of course, be pernicious to the spiritual life of both. The preacher-hunting Church-goer is in danger of substituting the praise of man for the praise of God; the popularity-hunting preacher is in still greater danger of ministering over-much to the worship of Self.

Still I felt that there was need of a stirring up

of more vitality and religious energy among us. I was aware of my own shortcomings, and want of power to fulfil the office of a "stir-up" preacher. I had no pretensions to oratory. My sermons, although carefully prepared and delivered from manuscript, were, generally speaking, quiet expositions on the Gospel, Epistle, or one of the lessons; from which I endeavoured to deduce one or more homely thoughts, with the hope that some of my people would carry them away into their daily lives.

And yet, somehow, it appeared to me that I failed to get hold of many of my people. I was reading lately of a young French *curé* who was dissatisfied with the results of his labours and sermons. He consulted a thoughtful old man of his congregation on the subject. "What," he asked, "is my fault? Where am I to be blamed?" "Your fault is this," was the reply—"you are too well understood." This saying, I think, is applicable to some English as well as French clergymen. Some of us are too simple, too well understood. Possibly it was the case with me.

For all this I could not change my style. I could not force myself to use language "not understanded of the people." Among our poor there was, of course, great ignorance. Even the well-to-do and educated parishioners had but a scanty notion of Church doctrines and principles. I venture to say that

some of our Sunday School children could have answered questions on Bible and Prayer Book better than even our Churchwarden. What, I asked myself, was the good of using high-flown language to old Betsy, our washerwoman, or to old Timothy, our Clerk, whose sum-total of Christian duty appeared to consist in saying "Amen" at the end of the prayers, and nodding assent at the end of the sermon? And how could I employ abstruse argument with people whose logic ranged little above the calculation of interest or the sale of goods?

However, we needed a Boanerges. And even should he thunder Greek metaphysics, and storm with bristling syllogisms, why all the better, if by so doing he would open a breach to the citadel and shrine of our being—the heart and the will.

It was at this juncture that I heard of and had a correspondence with the Rev. Sampson Slimmer. He was on the point of leaving another Curacy, and his Rector wrote to me to say that in the event of Mr. Slimmer coming to me I should find in him a most energetic fellow-helper. Mr. Slimmer enjoyed a considerable reputation as an extempore preacher, and this reputation had reached our parish long before he thought of coming himself. He had had already considerable experience in parish work, and was no longer a very young man—that is, he approached forty.

Our interview was satisfactory. Owing to Mr. Slimmer's age and capabilities I thought it right to offer him a larger stipend than is usual. He bowed his thanks, and accepted the Curacy of S. Peter's.

Now as Mr. Slimmer is one of the leading characters of my little book, more than that, one of the heroes of the town of Mulworth, I shall endeavour to describe his general aspect, leaving my reader to come to a conclusion regarding his disposition from my narrative of our intercourse.

Mr. Slimmer's appearance was, without being exactly attractive, somewhat remarkable. He was a man you would notice even in a crowd. Although his features were commonplace and of Saxon type, there was a certain air of gravity about his forehead which gave the impression of profound thought. This was enhanced by the artistic style in which he dressed his hair. It was long and clustering, and brushed upwards and backwards, as if its additional weight were too great for the already heavily loaded brain. His complexion was sandy; his nose short and his mouth large—an orator's mouth, according to what I have been told. His hands were large, and, like his cheeks, inclined to be fleshy. His manner might be considered a little brusque; he had a fidgetty habit of snapping his index finger on to the table; this, I supposed, was owing to the restless energy of his mind.

However, I was glad to have him, and after staying at the Rectory for a week, he adjourned to the Curate's lodgings.

As Mr. Slimmer's speciality consisted in his preaching, I shall dwell more particularly on his aspect in that vocation. As a reader he was emphatic, perhaps a little too much so for my quiet taste. In the Exhortation he laid particular stress on the words "Dearly," "pray," and "beseech;" in the General Confession on "erred," "strayed," and "lost." But as a preacher he was more than emphatic; he was histrionic.

I, naturally, awaited his first sermon with solicitude. I had some fear lest it would be too far above our heads. It certainly was extremely fluent. Words came at will—they rushed over each other like an avalanche. But I failed to follow the sequences, and I noticed that there were some defects in grammar and pronunciation. The thoughts of the sermon were either too deep or too subtle for my intellect to penetrate. When, according to my custom, I endeavoured to recall the points, they had escaped my memory.

Most of the congregation were, however, greatly struck with the sermon. Mr. Wagstaff, our Churchwarden, cordially shook hands with Mr. Slimmer, and warmly thanked him for his "grand discourse;" and Mrs. Daniel, whom we all regarded as an oracle

on such matters, pronounced Mr. Slimmer another Demosthenes.

Up to the time of Mr. Slimmer's coming, it had been customary for Rector and Curate to share the work of Church and Parish as equally as possible. We read the services and preached alternately. Mr. Slimmer, however, did not fall in with this arrangement, and owing to his peculiar powers I thought it right to defer to his wishes. He occasionally preached twice on Sunday; he generally preferred taking the evening sermon. Whenever he felt unable or disinclined, I took his place.

Notwithstanding this want of uniformity, it was obvious enough that Mr. Slimmer had many more hearers than had I. A large and ever increasing congregation listened with rapt attention to his bursts of eloquence; a comparatively small one gave but a listless regard to my little expositions. My Curate was a huge cannon; I but a pop-gun.

Still, for a time, I could not make out how the people knew who was to be the preacher. We did not advertise or give notice of the fact. And yet, Sunday after Sunday, ere the rostrum was mounted, the seats were filled or only half-filled according as Curate or Rector should preach. Strangers from other parishes came to our Church. They seemed to be gifted with prescience—they slipped out after

the third collect when my turn came to preach; they remained for Mr. Slimmer.

One Sunday evening, partly from curiosity and partly because I had prepared a sermon on the duty of worship, I resorted to a manœuvre by which I hoped to entrap the deserters. Pretending to think that Mr. Slimmer looked tired, I asked him to read the lessons, while I took the service; his absence from the reading desk would, I trusted, be regarded as a signal that he was to occupy the pulpit. My stratagem failed; the usual stampede occurred; I was justly ridiculed for my artifice.

The mystery was at length explained. Mr. Slimmer always had a glass of water placed on the pulpit for his use. The glass was a tell-tale; it had as great a charm for the people as a mirror has for a young lady—it kept them in their seats.

Mr. Slimmer availed himself of the glass two or three times during the course of his sermon; he also used his pocket-handkerchief to mop his heated forehead after one of his outbursts. The pauses which ensued at these periods were effective. There is an eloquence in silence.

I was weak enough again to have recourse to an expedient. One evening I had the glass placed on the pulpit for me. The result was merely to delay the egress until the last verse of the second hymn; during which I made my way to the pulpit.

After that I inwardly resolved to be guilty of no more artful dissimulation.

Mr. Slimmer was, at times, refreshingly original in the deductions he drew from his text, or perhaps I should say, skilful in discovering a text which suited his sermon.

To exhibit this, and his style of rhetoric, I append a short outline of one of his sermons, which created an unusual sensation, and certainly made an impression on my memory—

The text was "Line upon line." "There is," he went on, "a thick black line which marks the map of Continental Europe. It is black enough round France, it thickens round Spain and Portugal, it is as black as hell itself when it envelops Italy. This thick black line is Popery! It makes five huge blots, which slur the soil of those lands. Mark those blots" (here he raised his left hand and stretched out his fingers). "The first is the biggest and blackest of all" (here he pressed his thumb)—"it is Transubstantiation." The next four fingers were then tapped and pommelled in turn, until I feared he might injure them. They represented the other errors of Rome; winding up with the little finger, which symbolised the celibacy of the clergy. The denunciation of this last found favour with our spinsters, particularly, perhaps, as Mr. Slimmer was still a bachelor.

As there appeared to be no tendency to Romanism in our parish at the time, I could not discern the necessity for this controversial tirade.

The ordinary Sunday sermons were far from sufficient to slacken Mr. Slimmer's vigorous energy in polylogy (if I may coin a word). At his request I acquiesced to having a weekly prayer meeting in the schoolroom, on condition that he should conduct it, for I was no adept in this kind of work.

At these meetings the pocket-handkerchief did a two-fold service. While offering up an extempore prayer, Mr. Slimmer knelt upon it; standing up he used it as in the pulpit. Although not helping in these services I generally made one of the congregation. My feelings were sometimes tested by the unrestrainable unction of my Curate, especially when he prayed in a fervent voice for his "dear fellow-labourer."

This latter clause was altered one evening that I came late. I could not help supposing that he referred to me when he prayed for "the weak Shepherd at the head of the parish."

The circumstance recalled a somewhat similar one which happened in a certain mining district in Cornwall. One of the foremen, called "Captain Jack," held the position of chief haranguer to a dissenting body. Captain Jack unfortunately quarrelled with his lieutenant, old Simon Rodwick. The

consequence was that Simon seceded to Anglicanism, and the two men, although employed on the same mine, did not speak to each other for months. The Captain was magnanimous; he wished for reconciliation; he determined to bring back the erring sheep; he was first to hold out his hand, which was warmly accepted. Upon this the Captain proposed that both should adjourn to his house and say a prayer. The two men knelt down side by side. The host improved the occasion; he prayed "that the miserable sinner beside him might be forgiven for his low, back-biting proclivities; he had deserted his calling and election—he had been pitiful and mean—he had maligned his best friend—yet there was mercy even for him." At the conclusion of the prayer the two men stood up, and Captain Jack produced a couple of glasses of ale, one of which he tendered to his companion. Poor old Simon gazed at it for a minute, and then said, "Look 'ee 'ere, Cappen Jack, if I drinks this 'ere ale, may it choke me; and if iver ye sees me inside this door agin, I gives ye leave to call me all the rest of the ugly names ye can invent."

I have dwelt on this little incident, a true one, by the way, because I am aware that even Church of England clergymen have sometimes adopted a similar mode of disturbing the consciences (or the tempers) of brethren with whose opinions they did not agree.

Although Simon Rodwick became a confirmed Anglican after the episode in Captain Jack's house, I did not desert Mr. Slimmer's prayer meetings. After all, he probably said but the truth. There are weak shepherds—perhaps I am one of them—and yet I rejoice to know that there are strong ones to be found.

In a few months Mr. Slimmer's popularity had increased to such an extent that our Church was not large enough to hold the congregation. The "Mulworth Weekly Express" had paragraphs on his sermons; his photographs, taken in surplice, appeared in the stationers' windows; a local artist painted his picture to be hung up in the Town Hall.

Nor was his ability as a preacher the only merit in his favour. His indefatigable zeal, his care for the poor, were topics of conversation to which I was forced to listen; indeed, I was conscious by many an observation that my influence had become an inverse to his, and was on the wane. But the regard which the people had for Mr. Slimmer almost reached fever heat when he was seen carrying blankets to the poor. Widow Hawkins, his housekeeper, who, I suspected, had aims on his heart, told the neighbours that he went so far as to denude himself of the habiliments requisite for sleep.

There was no absolute necessity for Mr. Slimmer's

self-sacrifice—we had a parochial clothing and blanket club.

One other incident of his generosity is worth

recording. Meeting a badly-dressed rough in High Street, he accosted him with the question why he did not go to Church. The man replied that he

had not a decent coat. "Then take this," said Mr. Slimmer, taking off his own, "I went to Church in that, and you can go now."

This occurrence was quickly communicated all over the town. Even Mrs. Daniel wept when she heard of it. As for me, I did not venture to express my opinion that he might have asked the rough to go with him as far as his lodgings. This would have been more decent, at least, than walking a hundred yards through the town in shirt sleeves.

It was with some concern that I noticed Mr. Slimmer's garments looked extremely shabby. He no longer wore the well-fitting suit in which he appeared on his first visit to me. Now his coat was threadbare, and his shoes were cracked. The small addition which I made to his quarter's stipend did not rectify matters. A rather worldly-wise friend of mine who, somehow, disliked Mr. Slimmer, was stopping at the Rectory about this time. Perceiving my anxiety regarding Mr. Slimmer's dress, he originated the following aphorism—"The same kind of spirit will cause a man to dress well for display and badly for sympathy." To give weight to this he related an anecdote of a Roman Catholic priest somewhere in Ireland. This gentleman was anxious to have a large collection for some good purpose. To effect this he resorted to the following plan. He obtained a Franciscan cloak, a pair of well-worn

shoes, and the services of a brother priest from a distant parish. He persuaded this good man to dispense with his ordinary garments for a few days, and don the cloak and shoes. The *ruse* was successful; a holy friar wearing no stockings, with a hay rope encircling his tattered robe, perambulated the parish. The sympathy of the warm-hearted Irish was excited; they heard he was to preach the following Sunday. There was an enormous congregation and a very large collection. The two jolly priests, clothed in their wonted apparel, had a good laugh over the business and their whisky-toddy that same Sunday evening.

But I am straying away too far from Mr. Slimmer, especially as he was not to stay much longer with us, and as I am about to bring this chapter to a close.

Scarcely a year had elapsed from the date of Mr. Slimmer's coming ere it was found expedient to build another Church in our town, and form a new parish by cutting off a part of S. Peter's. To this I assented, for in my opinion the more Churches we have the greater is the probability of religion spreading.

Funds were not wanting for the purpose. The list was headed by the Rev. Sampson Slimmer for fifty pounds, with a note that he would pay when he could. My name came next for a similar sum.

Miss Chandelier, a rich spinster of middle life, who occupied the largest pew in S. Peter's, endowed the new parish with a donation of £5,000. Arrangements were made for holding a bazaar. This I did not like; it seems to me that we should avoid a semblance of barter when raising money for the purpose of worship; the people should subscribe voluntarily. However, the young ladies of the town enjoyed it; they sold bouquets of flowers and other such trifles at a good price, and had the opportunity of flirting with the young men, which rather shocked Mrs. Daniel and my dear wife.

In time the Church was built. At Mr. Slimmer's suggestion it was called S. Agnes', Agnes was Miss Chandelier's Baptismal name. Mr. Slimmer was presented to the living of S. Agnes'. Not long afterwards I had the pleasure of uniting him in holy wedlock to Miss Chandelier. At this Mrs. Hawkins' feelings were wounded; she did not take a seat in S. Agnes'.

During the rest of my stay at Mulworth I often met Mr. and Mrs. Slimmer. They occasionally dined with us and we with them. S. Agnes' Vicarage is beautifully furnished, and its occupants are, perhaps, as happy as are many other married people. I noticed, however, that Mrs. Slimmer sometimes addressed her husband in a tone of asperity.

Mr. Slimmer gradually grew stouter, and, I fear,

less active than of yore. His sermons, too, must have lost something of their wonted vigour, for many of my people who had deserted S. Peter's for S. Agnes', returned to the Mother Church; and, in time, my diminished parish resumed its earlier aspect, as if Mr. Slimmer never had been there.

CHAPTER III.

MY SECOND CURATE—THE REV. ROGER RASHLEIGH.

"We may outrun
By violent swiftness, that which we run at,
And lose by over-running."

Henry VIII.

THE next name on my list of Curates is that of the Rev. Roger Rashleigh. At first it was not my design to include him in these sketches, for the reason that, in many respects, he is not dissimilar to the majority of young English Clergymen. That is to say, he was fairly well educated, he had taken a University degree, and I found him to be fond of his work. Although intelligent enough, he presented no exceptional brilliancy of powers, he did not stand out in relief like Mr. Slimmer.

On second thoughts I have changed my intention, and shall devote a chapter to him. My reason for

including him is really the same reason I gave for thinking of excluding him.

If, as I have supposed, he resembles other young clergymen, it is possible that some of these may read this chapter. I trust they will, and that they may be able to see their own lineaments reflected, however dimly, from the picture I shall paint of Mr. Rashleigh.

While he was my Curate at Mulworth, Mr. Rashleigh betrayed some of those foibles, rather than faults, which are incident to young men of his temperament. These I shall make no effort to disguise. He had, as I am glad to think most of our young clergymen have, many good traits of character. If I fail to note all these, it does not signify. Indeed I have my private reasons for refraining from eulogy. Mr. Rashleigh is no longer my Curate, but he is a neighbour of mine, as Vicar of an adjacent parish. He may chance to read these pages, and so suspect who wrote them and of whom they are written. If so, knowing his disposition, I am sure he would prefer a laugh at a description of his earlier mistakes to a self-applying perusal of a catalogue of virtues. But I must not anticipate, and so I proceed with my narrative.

Mr. Rashleigh's father had been an old college acquaintance of mine. He was at this time a leading barrister in London. Although we had not met

for many years we occasionally corresponded. My old friend wrote to me about his son Roger, who had lately taken his degree at Cambridge, and was seeking a Title and Curacy. In this letter the writer was good enough to say that he would prefer no one to me as his son's Rector and adviser. As he knew I was single-handed, perhaps I would give him a trial. It was in this way that Roger Rashleigh became my coadjutor.

Apart from my association with his father, my new Curate impressed me favourably when, after his ordination, he came to Mulworth. I liked his appearance and manner. He was quite the self-contained, high-spirited young fellow who could give a certain brightness to our staid, quiet home, and rouse me by his sprightly conversation into recollections of my own youthful days.

When age and youth commingle in anything like harmony, each receives a benefit from the other. If the experience of age can temper youth, then, on the other hand, the kinetic energy of youth can lend something of its animation to age. Whenever Mr. Rashleigh came to the Rectory, it was as if another candle had been put in the room.

However, I must endeavour to sketch him, as faithfully as I can, in his social and clerical aspect.

At the University Mr. Rashleigh had distinguished himself by winning his "blue;" that is, he had

played in the annual cricket match between Oxford and Cambridge. He was evidently very proud of this; indeed, I could gather from his observations that he regarded it as a greater distinction than if he had taken a double first.

It is wonderful how our acquirements as well as our peculiarities cling to us.

> "Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
> Testa diu."

Something of his learning will be discernible in the student's gesture; the curvature of the head or shoulders is an index of thought or care. Mr. Rashleigh was not a man of deep thought; he had few cares, but he was a cricketer. And he carried something of the cricket-field with him into the ministry. When he walked up the aisle to the chancel his gait was that of a young fellow, bat on shoulder, going to take his place at the wicket, and when he stood up at the reading desk he appeared as if getting ready to play the ball.

His week-day attire, too, was more lay than clerical. The colour of his clothes appeared to me as rather too light for our sombre profession, and his short well-cut coat gave him something of a dandified air. His hat was of ellipsoidal shape; I believe this is termed a "pot" hat. Sometimes he wore a straw hat, cinctured with a light blue ribbon. He

generally carried a huge stick, and was accompanied by his great Newfoundland dog, Ranger. He also cultivated a moustache, which he was fond of caressing; this caused him to expose a large gold ring which bore his crest, and which he wore on his little finger. Indeed the only item of clothing which revealed the clergyman was a small white tie, and even this he occasionally replaced by a coloured one.

There was nothing vulgar about my Curate's dress; but it appeared to me to be incongruous with the priestly office, or even the diaconate. I considered it my duty to remonstrate with Mr. Rashleigh on the subject of his dress, my intimacy with his father would surely admit of my doing so. Not that I think the external habiliment is, intrinsically, of much importance, but because some of our parishioners might imagine that lightness of dress is indicative of a want of professional seriousness. I pointed out to him that doctors, when visiting their patients, assume a garb in keeping with their grave demeanour, and that there was all the more reason for a clergyman, liable to be called at any moment to a sick bed-side, to be as achromatic in dress as sedate in manner. The good fellow received my observations without being offended. He certainly muttered something about hypocritical ostentation and professional veneer;

but I noticed that on the arrival of his next suit of clothes from his London tailor he had acted on my suggestion. I fear that it was only from his respect for me.

Although Mr. Rashleigh, so far as I could perceive, was by no means proficient in the subtleties of politics, yet he professed to be a radical, and adopted many of the stock phrases and arguments of that party. He quite shocked Mrs. Smith and myself by the way in which he spoke of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen, whom he termed, "a decent old lady, utterly unnecessary to the welfare of the State." He offended my Tory sympathies by denouncing the House of Lords as a stop-gap to enlightenment and progress.

On this matter I also deemed it right to seriously expostulate with him. I referred him to our duty to our neighbour in the Catechism, and more especially to the words, "to honour and obey the Queen . . . . to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters." His reply was to the effect that he had yet to learn whether the Lords were his betters, and as for the Catechism, why it was a relic of serfdom, compiled by some Erastian sycophant of the Reformation!

This want of reverence on Mr. Rashleigh's part betrayed itself even in our own little circle. I shall give an instance of this.

Old Doctor Pilling and his wife were on intimate terms with us. It was our custom once a week to meet at each other's houses, and have a quiet rubber of whist after tea. We played the old-fashioned game, counting up to ten points. During one of our sittings Mr. Rashleigh happened to come in and look over our hands. He laughed at our play, and said it was only fit for our grandmothers. Poor Mrs. Pilling grew quite crimson when he told her that she had lost three tricks by not leading trumps, of which she had six; and my wife was disturbed from her usual serenity at being told that she shouldn't have put the queen on her partner's knave. I must admit that old Pilling and I had a conference together afterwards on my Curate's suggestions, and we concluded that he was right in some of them. But I could not prevail upon my wife to change her mode of play. She gave it as her opinion that Mr. Rashleigh, although nice in some ways, was very rude and conceited; and he certainly knew nothing about whist. When one evening he took a hand and happened to win, she affirmed that it was all luck.

The last paragraph may appear to contain too trivial a subject to have dwelt upon. I have written it for the purpose of exemplifying how clever men may make themselves disagreeable by self-assertion. There are many young men, clergymen included,

who are apt to regard their elders as far beneath them in intellect, because they are not adepts where they themselves excel. They dub them "old women." They make no allowance for diversity of talent; they do not consider that even old women may be superior to young men in acquirements which are more important than whist or cricket. I have often felt how needful it is for us, when addressing others, to remember the precept, "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt." Pertinently to this I quote an observation of my worldly-wise friend alluded to in the last chapter. "It is," he said, "a great mistake to be too clever." The remark was, I think, a wise one; it admits of different applications.

As my reader will have already discerned, Mr. Rashleigh was one of those men who are liable to make mistakes, which recoil upon themselves to their own disadvantage. I shall give a few examples of this tendency.

Gifted with youth, good spirits, and a pleasant manner, and furnished with a fair allowance by his father, my Curate was naturally a favourite in society The county families noticed him, and invited him to their dinner parties and dances.

Here I digress into a parenthesis on the subject of dancing. I considered it my duty to take exception to my Curate indulging in a waltz; for it

struck me as scarcely consonant with the dignity of a clergyman, to see him sweeping round with swallow-tails fluttering, reminding one of an excited magpie. A quadrille might be permissible; it is a more stately kind of dance. But, perhaps, I have no right to dictate or give lessons in dancing, seeing that at the last Lulbrook Harvest Home I began the village ball on the Rectory meadow with Mrs. Timmins, our dairy woman, for my partner.

To continue about Mr. Rashleigh. He was received into the best society, and Sir Thomas Scratcham, our Conservative member, desired to show him attention.

Unfortunately, however, his political opinions and independence of manner, after a short time led to Mr. Rashleigh's exclusion from a social intercourse which would have been most beneficial to him, and which was certainly to his taste.

A Liberal meeting happened to be convened in Mulworth, for the purpose of taking steps to oust Sir Thomas from his seat. Mr. Rashleigh not only attended this meeting, but actually went so far as to attempt a speech. I heard afterwards (to my secret joy) that the speech was a ridiculous failure, and did more harm than good to the Liberal cause.

Mr. Rashleigh, although not a public speaker, was a private mimic. At a convivial gathering he

imitated Sir Thomas' nasal and somewhat drawling method of speaking. Both the meeting and the mimicry were reported at Scratch Court. When they next met, Sir Thomas bowed stiffly to my Curate, and Lady Scratcham raised her eye-glass and her eyebrows, and did not bow. In a word, they dropped him.

Mr. Rashleigh felt aggrieved at the slight; he spoke of Sir Thomas as "Sir Bombastes Nincompoop," and reminded me that Lady Scratcham was "a Yorkshire breweress." Still these mirthful explosions were but a small compensation for the loss of good dinners and genial society.

Nor were Mr. Rashleigh's mistakes confined to the direction of the upper and influential classes. He erred in an opposite manner in his connection with the shopkeepers and artizans. He made a point of going to tea with the Crockers, who kept a grocer's shop, simply because Mrs. Berbeck, our bank manager's wife, looked down on them. He invited Bill Slasher, the blacksmith, and Joe Slicer, the cobbler, to smoke in his rooms; and was hail-fellow-well-met with Mr. Grabb's apprentice boys, that he might give an evidence of the levelling influence of Christianity.

Now I agree with the sentiment, which has been often expressed, that "a clergyman should be neither above nor below anyone in his parish." But this

must be held with "a mental reserve," and applied to a clergyman in his professional aspect. There are grades in society which even a clergyman cannot ignore; they are indispensable to the human race, constituted as it is. The uneducated classes cannot appreciate a recognition of equality in those they deem their betters; they are apt to regard it as condescension, as they are apt to consider modesty as the outcome of weakness. Over familiarity may not always breed contempt, but it is very likely to dispense with common courtesy. It was so in this case. Bill Slasher and Joe Slicer, who dropped their h's, sometimes dropped the Mr. when speaking of, or even to, my well-meaning Curate.

Society does exist; it has its conventionalities as well as its etiquettes, and they must be respected. Mr. Rashleigh certainly had an influence for good among the working class. He played cricket with the young men, and thereby gained a reputation for manliness and cordiality. By this means he managed to establish a Working Men's Club; he induced many of the members to come to Church. And yet, I fear, the smoke of his pipe in the cricket field clouded his good work in the parish.

In visiting the poor, he made his mistakes too. His injudicious donations were likely to pauperise some and make others lazy. Old Jane Burket, a miser with a stocking full of sovereigns, extracted

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half-a-crown from him by her whines; and Tim Guthrie, a worthless fellow, got dreadfully drunk in drinking the health of (to use his own words) "the decent young parson who tipped him two bob that morning."

My Curate was also deficient in that tact, that *savoir faire*—which is so essential to a clergyman. Mrs. Skirt, the tailor's wife, and Mrs. Cram, who kept the little toy-shop, had a quarrel about some trifle. Mr. Rashleigh endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation, with the result that they both turned upon himself as an interfering busybody. I have not said much about Mr. Rashleigh as a reader or preacher; the truth is, little is to be said about him here. He read as well as most clergymen; he preached moral theses.

Yet I must mention that even in Church he was consistent to his law-transgressing proclivities and his proneness to make mistakes. He said the Creed as if he did not quite believe all its clauses. After reading the lessons he said, "*Thus* endeth the first (or second) lesson;" and before the Epistle he used the words, "The Epistle is taken from, &c." However, when I pointed out to him that an ignoring of the rubric was really no improvement, and that his use sounded a little affected and pedantic, he adopted the authorised form.

He neglected to prefix the word "Saint" in mentioning the names of the Apostles, until I reminded

him of the story of a Roman Catholic Priest requesting a Dissenting Minister to call the Apostles "Mister" if he objected to "Saint."

At times he was rather ambitious in his style of preaching. I give a specimen of this, which I took down in pencil at the time—

"We arrive at Evolution by the transmutation of an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, into a definite, coherent, heterogeneity, and through a continuous system of differentiations and integrations. Therefore pneumaticism may be defined as the metempsychosis of a differentiated and integrated psychism."

As I felt rather puzzled at this elaborate sentence, I afterwards asked Mr. Rashleigh for an explanation of it. He had evidently some difficulty in giving one; indeed, I discovered that he had strung together two passages from different authors, and thereby mystified himself.

With all his faults, I was sorry when Mr. Rashleigh left me. This came about through his being offered a small country living in the gift of some relative.

Perhaps he may be deemed fortunate in gaining preferment thus early in life. There are men like him, worthy and well-meaning enough, who injure their own prospects by a certain self-sufficiency which dims their better qualities. They make enemies where they might have retained friends, without wounding their true dignity.

Men of position seldom excuse assumption in men

without position: it seems to diminish their own importance. And when a Curate's preferment rests with his own unaided resources, it recedes into distance—he remains a Curate.

But I must not apostrophise. As I stated in the beginning of this chapter, Mr. Rashleigh is now a neighbour of mine. When I came to this, my present living, I found him Vicar of the next parish.

He is still a young man, young in hours as well as in years, to paraphrase from one of Lord Bacon's finest passages. He is liked in the parish, he still plays cricket. In many things he has become wiser; his politics are modified; his sermons are more simple; his manners are quieter. My wife asks him to tea and a rubber occasionally; he does not find fault, and she asks his advice as to what to lead. And yet it has struck me that he would prefer a wider scope for his energies, and that he is not quite satisfied with the prospect of remaining Vicar of a little hamlet to the end of life's chapter. When he was with us the other night I stole a look at him while his face was thoughtfully turned towards the fire, and the conversation had ceased for a minute. It is a bright face, and yet there is a soft sadness in it. I felt myself unconsciously repeating a passage I had read somewhere—"The gulf between what a man is and what he was intended to be is the truly tragic thing in his destinies."

CHAPTER IV.

MY THIRD CURATE—THE REV. MARMADUKE MAYPOLE.

"On n'est jamais si ridicule par les qualités que l'on a que par celles que l'on affecte d'avoir."—*Rochefoucauld.*

MY next Curate, of whom I would speak at some length, is Mr. Maypole. It will have been noticed that Mr. Slimmer and Mr. Rashleigh were different in many personal characteristics, as well as in their views as Churchmen. Mr. Maypole was a contrast to both: he was as far removed from the one as from the other. Indeed I

might borrow an illustration from mathematics to describe these, my three Curates—relatively they stood to one another as the points of an equilateral triangle.

Mr. Maypole was undoubtedly possessed of good parts, and some excellent qualities. Of these he gave proof at School and College, and, I have every reason to believe, during his first Curacy, to which he had been ordained, and from which he came to Mulworth. As he is by no means the least interesting among those on my list, I shall give a brief sketch of his previous life.

He was the son of a very respectable yeoman, who held a farm on the property of a Mr. Marmaduke. In compliment to this good squire, Mrs. Maypole named her first-born son after him. Mr. Marmaduke was kind enough not to consider this a trespass; he esteemed his worthy tenant, and shewed various kindnesses to his little namesake.

The boy evidenced signs of a fair amount of ability; he was sent to a small Grammar School in a neighbouring town. Here he won prizes in Bible History, and in *literis humanioribus*. When he approached young-manhood, unlike most boys, he manifested an inclination, as well as an aptitude, for the Ministry. Owing to this, his parents made an effort which cost them some self-denial, and sent him to a Theological College. He passed through

his course with credit, and came out first of his year. This honour was not necessarily a very difficult feat, as there were only two other candidates; still it argued perseverance on his part, and there is no reason against the supposition that the first of three in a small College may be as distinguished a scholar as the first of a hundred in a great University.

For the two years previous to his coming to Mulworth, Mr. Maypole had worked as Curate in a remote village near Wales. I received a most satisfactory letter from his Vicar, who mentioned that it was his Curate's wish to leave him; that, not unnaturally, he considered himself "buried alive" in so out-of-the-way a place, and desired a larger field for his energies, and one more suitable to his talents.

Mr. Maypole was a tall, dark man of twenty-six or so, when he came to me. This is about as much as I can say of his appearance, which in other respects had nothing particularly striking in it. He was neither very handsome nor very plain. In complexion he differed from the florid Mr. Slimmer; his dress, unlike that of Mr. Rashleigh, was decidedly clerical.

At our first interview he gave me the impression that he was rather taciturn; he allowed me to do most of the talking, and seemed to agree with all I said. Indeed his deference created quite a novel

sensation in me, after my previous experiences

It is not, of course, my intention to write anything like a history of my parish. Still, that Mr. Maypole's work and character may be the better understood, it will be necessary for me to notice certain changes which had gradually sprung up, and which gave me much concern.

I have noticed that stars do not appear singly, either in the calm firmament of Heaven, or in the great political and social revolutions of earth. Readers of history will note this. Men of genius come in pairs or in clusters; when in pairs they generally stand in opposition. The Ecclesiastical World, the Scientific World, the Military World endorse this statement. Ignatius Loyola started into notoriety and power almost at the same time as did Luther. Newton found a rival in Leibnitz. If France had a Napoleon, England had her Wellington.

Even so did it happen at Mulworth. I have stated that Mulworth was not very much influenced in the long run by the great powers of Mr. Slimmer. In saying this I was a little inaccurate. Indirectly he was the primary cause of a change in the ecclesiastical aspect of the parish. He sowed the seeds of some discontent; they brought forth fruit in time. He was a star, perhaps I should rather say, a meteor; and in conformity with the law to which I have

alluded, another star arose in opposition. This was in the person of Captain Filbert, a retired military gentleman. Captain Filbert, having no more battles to fight for Queen and country, resolved to be a champion in the Church. Having nothing else to do, by which he might exercise his energy, he allowed it to flow in an ecclesiastical channel. He was certainly a member of the Church Militant.

It came to pass, then, noiselessly at first, and then with slowly-increasing sound, that a division was created among our parishioners, and two parties were formed. The waters of Jordan were disturbed, and Ephraimites and Gileadites mustered on opposite banks. In plain language, a small but strong coterie of High Church people came into existence under the leadership of Captain Filbert, whose chief aim was to swell his ranks with recruits.

It would take me too long to describe the passages-at-arms which took place from time to time; or the running fires which I had to parry or escape from by subtlety; for, being a man of peace, I dislike anything which disturbs the quiet flow of the spiritual life. Some of my congregation wanted my surplice to be shorter; others longer. Some would have my stole narrower; others broader. The new generation of High Church folk, under their gallant Captain, were for pushing me on; the old Low Church generation were for pulling

me back; so that, mentally speaking, I was likely to be torn asunder by the contending parties.

It was on this account that when Mr. Maypole came to Mulworth I went so far as to request him to steer as clear as he could from any appearance of favouritism towards either party. Not that I wished to bias his own theological opinions, but because I thought a clergyman should be no partisan in his own parish; without absolutely agreeing with all, he can be a friend of all. And surely it is far better to lead people by friendly persuasion than to drive them by an attack upon their deeply-rooted convictions, whether we call them prejudices or not.

Now I have always considered it advisable that, ere making any changes in the mode of conducting Church services, a Rector should, to a certain extent, consult the feelings of his congregation. And surely he is justified in making such changes if no rubrics are thereby infringed upon, and the alterations are likely to deepen devotion in public worship.

For instance, I am sure that it is a good plan, when the Holy Communion is celebrated at the eleven o'clock service, to preach a very short sermon of not more than seven minutes' duration; and also to try to induce all the congregation to remain in Church to the end of the sacred service, and not for the majority to leave immediately after the prayer

for the Church Militant. This, I am convinced, would cause many non-communicants to become communicants.

Again, if a clergyman and his choir are capable of doing it well, it seems to me that the Morning and Evening Prayers might occasionally be intoned. This would probably have the effect of increasing the congregation. Music, too, may be made the means of prayer as well as of praise. Worship is to be the employment of the Saints in Heaven; and in Heaven there is to be music, instrumental and vocal. It will be, doubtless, very beautiful there; why then should we not have it as beautiful as possible in God's Church on earth?

The result of these meditations was that I determined to have an intoned service, if the congregation were not antagonistic to it. I found the majority rather in favour of the proposal. Mr. Maypole, too, gladly assented; otherwise, indeed, it must have fallen through, as my knowledge of music is very limited. But my Curate was proficient in the art; he took some of the ladies in hand, and after a few weeks' preparation an attempt was made. My wife, who is my authority on this point, told me the service went very well; she was also pleased with Mr. Maypole's voice, which she pronounced true and resonant.

I should mention that some time before this we

had discarded the gown as a preaching vestment. It is true that I felt parting as with an old friend, and at first a little uncomfortable in the pulpit. There was a certain freedom of action, if not of speech, about my old Oxford gown, and I was vain enough (for vanity *will* steal up to the pulpit with us) to imagine that it suited my personal appearance. My wife has since metamorphosed it into my gardening coat.

By degrees, and chiefly through the efforts of my Curate, a fairly good choir of men and boys was formed, and in a few months we actually put them into surplices. This was a great deviation from the beaten track, and it gave rise to a considerable commotion. Captain Filbert was much pleased; but Mr. Wagstaff interviewed me in the vestry after the first appearance of the white robes; he expressed himself in harsh language on the subject of what he termed "innervations." I noticed, too, that Miss Simpkin, who occupied the front seat in the nave, combined devotion with inspection; while her head was bent upon her hands in prayer she managed to peer, through a crevice in her fingers, on what was going on in the chancel.

In time, however, the dissentients grew accustomed to the change; when they perceived that it did not lead to Rome, they became satisfied. I really think that the introduction of surplices and more music

into S. Peter's, Mulworth, was most beneficial. The congregation increased, and many of our lads, who would otherwise have been very rowdy, improved considerably under the discipline of Mr. Maypole, and the refining influence of music and religion.

After this considerable, but necessary, divergence from the principal subject of this chapter, I am in a better position to return to the personal history of my third Curate.

Mr. Maypole, as I have led my readers to suppose, was a good worker. Not only did he do his duty in the Church and choir, he also, very willingly and ably, gave Scripture lessons in the day schools. I now proceed to notice some of his particular characteristics in which, as I have already said, he differed from my previous Curates.

One of these, which may appear too trivial to mention, was his accentuation. I have often considered that the sound of a voice is, to some extent, an index of character. Mr. Rashleigh, for instance, had a blunt, honest kind of voice which denoted a certain fearlessness and independence. Mr. Slimmer's voice, although very loud, seemed to come from a throat which had been oiled.

I cannot thus tersely describe Mr. Maypole's voice. Indeed, it appeared to me that he had two voices; his ordinary voice, which he used with ordinary, common-place people and for everyday work; and

his extraordinary voice, which he retained for Sundays, and people of fashion.

When he assumed the latter intonation, it gave one the impression that he wished to be very correct in his enunciation; yet this very correctness, or rather the attempt at it, sounded unpleasant to me. For instance, he rendered the word *Church* dissyllabically *Chœ-urch*, and *brethren* became *bray-thrun*. Perhaps I ought not to be so critical here, as I believe several young clergymen affect what is termed "a clerical voice," which they trust in time to exchange for an episcopal one.

Mr. Maypole employed his Sunday-clothes' voice when addressing Sir John and Lady Scratcham. Indeed I noticed that his demeanour towards them was very different to that of Mr. Rashleigh. When they came occasionally over from their own parish to our Church, Mr. Maypole politely met them at the gate, and, hat in hand, held the carriage door open. Nor did he wait for invitations to Scratch Court; he considered it a duty to visit there uninvited, and generally managed to call before lunch, to which he stopped.

A slight error which my Curate made on one of these visits nearly proved fatal to his being subsequently asked to stay to lunch. The Countess of R. had just come to Scratch Court, accompanied by a "companion," a young lady of gentle birth and

personal attractions, but poor. Hearing of her ladyship's arrival, Mr. Maypole was not long in paying his respects. Unfortunately he did not know anything of Lady R.'s appearance or age. When ushered into the drawing-room two ladies were seated there; one a bright, elegant young woman, whom he presumed to be Lady R.; the other an ordinary-looking old person, who, he supposed, was a sort of duenna. Regarding the latter with a supercilious air, he addressed the former with much deference; stood at a respectful distance from her, and made the most of his regulation voice. Lady Scratcham appeared on the scene; the ladies' names were made known; the duenna was the Countess, the other lady a nobody. Mr. Maypole immediately tried to rectify his mistake; he transferred his attentions to the old lady, and looked haughtily on the young. It was too late; he only made matters worse. Lady R. froze towards him, her fair companion showed the poor Curate that she was more than his match in dignity, Lady Scratcham considered it all very funny, and laughed loudly, and Sir John, when he heard of the incident, became more reserved towards Mr. Maypole.

Poor people are quicker at noticing peculiarities than we are apt to suppose. Bill Slasher and Joe Slicer noticed Mr. Maypole's two-fold voice; they had caught something of Mr. Rashleigh's power of

mimicry, and they used it at my third Curate's expense.

Notwithstanding these slight peculiarities of voice, Mr. Maypole was by no means a *vox et præterea nihil;* his sermons were quite up to the average, and contained a good deal of sound matter, especially on the doctrines and principles of the Church. He appeared to be free from many of those temptations to which some young Curates are subject; he was not a flirt, nor a croquet player; he upheld the dignity of the priesthood.

It was owing to my confidence in his trustworthiness that I determined upon taking a long-contemplated trip with my wife to see our son in America, leaving Mr. Maypole in sole charge during our absence of six months.

On our return I found that a great many changes had taken place in the Church and Parish. I will specify some of these. Mr. Maypole had adopted coloured stoles, green ones at this particular time; I learned that this was the colour for the Sundays after Trinity. The choir were now in cassocks as well as surplices; a processional hymn was sung before the service; and at the head of the procession Captain Filbert marched with a cross in his hands.

Some alteration was also observable in Mr. Maypole's appearance and manner. He sometimes

wore his cassock cinctured with a white girdle, when going round the parish. In the reading desk and pulpit he had assumed a more statuesque attitude ; he seemed to take considerable pains in arranging the fingers of one hand so as to correspond with those of the other. The intonation of his voice was now pitched in a higher key ; to me it sounded more artificial than of yore.

A very uncivil war had also been declared in the columns of the "Mulworth Weekly Express!" Letters signed by "a Churchman" and by "a Protestant" succeeded each other ; they were more rude than logical, more satirical than religious. Their modes of expression suggested Mr. Maypole as the "Churchman," and Mr. Slimmer as the "Protestant!" It was remarkable that these two clergymen were on anything but friendly terms.

Mr. Wagstaff had resigned his churchwardenship, and, with a few others, had joined the dissenting chapel. He, too, had contributed to the literature of the "Weekly Express"—his subject being "Rank Popery in the Church."

My Curate did not come out of the war without receiving some blows. He was hooted in the streets ; I regret to add that hissing had been heard in Church. Indeed on one Sunday it had been found necessary to have some policemen in attendance. However, Mr. Maypole was compen-

sated; he gained a tremendous popularity with Captain Filbert's party; he posed as a high priest and a martyr.

Were I to attempt to describe my own feelings, I should utterly fail. Nor do I care to try. What man (that is man in distinction to woman) is anxious to open his heart to the world, when it is vexed and troubled?

As Rector of the parish I was placed in a dilemma. Should I acquiesce in the present state of things? or should I return to our former and more simple use? My first impulse was for the latter course; not that I object to coloured stoles, for I see no harm in them, nor to a cross being carried; surely it is well to keep that grand symbol before us. No, the impulse arose from my being annoyed.

But then we must put aside our own feelings when duty is concerned. I honestly tried to do this, and weighed the matter carefully. To acquiesce would be to admit that the Shepherd was weak indeed, and such an admission is bad for a parish. Not to acquiesce would be to offend many earnest Church-people, especially the donors of several handsome gifts made to the Church in my absence; it would be to open a new campaign of undesirable warfare.

Taking a careful view of the whole situation, and of the many questions bearing on it, I resolved to

leave things as they were. Perhaps some will say I was wrong. If so, I was punished for my weak concession. Some of the Low Church people called me a Puseyite and a trimmer; some of the High Church party described me as an old fossil.

From this time my old wide-sleeved surplice and black scarf became obsolete; nor could they be utilised as my gown had been. I submitted to be vested in a short, tight-fitting surplice and coloured stole. Yet I had some difficulty in appearing as cordial towards my Curate as I might have wished.

Mr. Maypole appeared to imagine that with advance in Churchmanship a proportionate advance in distinguished birth was requisite. His paper and envelopes were adorned with a crest, a hand holding a pole, with the motto "Excelsior" underneath; and I was informed that Baron Maypole fought at the battle of Creçy. Some old families degenerate, the principle of involution exists no less than does that of evolution. And, bearing on this point, I shall narrate an occurrence which gave me a further insight into my Curate's character. It may exemplify how an over-anxious desire to exhibit family antiquity can, paradoxically, lead to a non-recognition of sufficient honour towards one's immediate progenitors.

As I chanced to pass Mr. Maypole's lodgings one day, an elderly man rushed out from the house,

carrying a carpet bag and large umbrella, and evidently in a perturbed frame of mind. Thinking it within my province to enquire the cause of his distress, I saluted him, and we became acquainted. He was Mr. Maypole's father, and he was under the impression that his son had treated him badly. He spoke in a rapid and excited tone of voice, and with much gesticulation "I wanted, Sir," he went on, "to pay my respects to you, as my son's Rector, but Marmy wouldn't let me. No, he's a thankless, conceited boy; I know what he's wanting—he's ashamed of his old father and wanted to hide him, and I disown him."

I had some difficulty in calming the feelings of my new acquaintance, by assuring him he was under some mistake, and that so excellent and earnest a young clergyman as his son was could not be guilty of so serious a transgression. Finding that there was no absolute necessity for old Mr. Maypole's immediate return to his home, I insisted upon his coming to the Rectory, where he was furnished with a bed-room. I sent an invitation to my Curate to come and dine with us that evening, and, with a little management, father and son were reconciled. My wife decanted a bottle of our special old port, and I listened with much pleasure to the honest and acute observations of the kind old farmer.

Afterwards, when alone in the quiet of my study, I could not help asking myself, "Which is the more worthy scion of the hero of Creçy?" and I felt that I should experience a greater difficulty than I had anticipated in writing a contemplated sermon on "What is a true Gentleman?"

The incident reminded me of a story of a celebrated Scotch Divine; it was told me by one who lived near his birthplace in the Highlands, and may be accepted as true. The Rev. Dr. *Z.* was of humble origin; he rose to fame through his oratorical powers, and was received into the best London society. For some purpose he paid a visit to his father, a labourer, who lived close to a remote village. On his return to catch the coach which passed through this village, Dr. *Z.* was accompanied by his father, who carried his son's portmanteau. As the coach drove up, a couple of noblemen who knew him cordially saluted the Divine from the box-seat, and said they would make room for him. His own thought was, How shall I conceal that *this* man is my father? An expedient suggested itself; he took the portmanteau from the old man, dropped a shilling into his hand, saying, "Thank you, John." Before the poor old father had recovered his surprise, the coach was out of sight.

The following episode may serve as a caution to young clergymen desirous of gaining preferment; it

may exemplify how essential are the qualifications of prudence and foresight.

A small living in our neighbourhood fell vacant about this time. Sir John Scratcham was a friend of the patron, with whom he had much influence. Mr. Maypole's name was mentioned, with the result that I received a letter asking if I could spare my Curate to take duty at Y. for a couple of Sundays. I replied in the affirmative.

Suspecting that this meant "a trotting out" (if I may use a sporting phrase), I recommended Mr. Maypole to take with him his four best sermons.

On the first Sunday evening a large congregation assembled at Y. Church; although it had rather a Ritualistic notoriety, still many Dissenters, allured by the novelty of a strange preacher, were present. The sermon was a little unfortunate; it went to show that no one outside the pale of the Catholic Church could possibly be saved; it was a diatribe against Calvinism and Lutheranism. Some of the Church people, as well as the Dissenters, were offended, and Mr. Maypole discovered he had made a mistake.

The fame of the sermon spread, and was appreciated in other quarters. An influential Roman Catholic family in the parish decided to go for once to a Church of England Service, and were present at Y. the following Sunday evening. Mr. Maypole

had, meanwhile, determined to rectify matters, and on this evening he proved without the shadow of a doubt that the great Beast whose number is Six Hundred and Sixty Six could be no other than the Pope of Rome.

The Roman Catholic family did not again attend the Anglican Service; nor was Mr. Maypole offered the living of Y.

I have said little of my Curate's disposition where the tender passion is concerned. Here he was prudent; perhaps, by nature, he was not susceptible to the attractions of beauty and grace. Still I am sure that among the fair sex he had his admirers; I have noticed, by the way, that the strange paradox called Woman is ready to give her affections where there is no evidence of reciprocity, and almost as ready to make light of the love she may have won. Be this as it may, the bright eyes of Sunday School teachers and Church-decorating ladies sparkled in vain; their hearts throbbed without a response from my discreet Curate.

Yet he was not destined to be a celibate. He judiciously acted on the Hibernian principle, "Don't marry for money, but go where money is." The nieces of a wealthy brewer were his reputed heiresses. And though Mr. Maypole was at enmity with Mr. Slimmer, still—

"Fas est et ab hoste doceri."

For a time Mr. Maypole paid his addresses to the elder niece; but on his being informed by the brewer's lawyer that the younger was sole heiress, he transferred his attentions to her.

In course of time she accepted his suit. He conferred on her a name, Mrs. Marmaduke Maypole, and a family lineage, of which she was proud. It was an exchange. She brought him a considerable dowry, from which he purchased the advowson, or perpetual right of presentation to a living. This he presented to himself, and I had to look out for a new Curate.

In looking back upon Mr. Maypole's stay with me I find myself quoting from Rochefoucauld, "Les vertus se perdent dans l'intérêt comme les fleuves se perdent dans la mer," and I meditate upon the difficulty of finding what Aristotle calls an ἀνὴρ τετράγωνος—a square—a four-cornered man.

CHAPTER V.

MY FOURTH CURATE—THE REV. PETER PARCHMENT.

"The obscure trouble of a baffled instinct."

Coleridge.

BY this time S. Peter's, Mulworth, had gained the reputation of being decidedly High Church; its Rector was regarded as a Ritualist! When, on Mr. Maypole's departure, I advertised for a Curate, several High Churchmen were among the applicants.

Were it not a breach of confidence, I might possibly amuse my readers by giving extracts from some of the letters which I received. Yet I was instructed by them. For instance, in two of these letters the expression occurred, "I hold the Six Points." This led me to enquire into and discover what the six points are. I took exception to the

mode of summing up in a few of these letters; my correspondents signed themselves, "Yours faithfully in Christ," &c. The phrase appeared to me a little affected, and I consider that pious ejaculations are superfluous in letters.

After some debate and a considerable correspondence, my choice fell upon the Rev. Peter Parchment, and he became Curate of S. Peter's.

Now, apart from the interest which I trust may be awakened in Mr. Parchment himself, I have two particular reasons for introducing him to my readers.

In the first place, he is very like and also very unlike my next Curate, whom I recall with the tenderest feelings. And if these two young clergymen, presenting a similarity and a contrast, are compared, the truth will appear that two men, who closely resemble each other in disposition, education, and purpose, may separate widely in the later experiences of life and religion.

My second reason is, that even if Mr. Parchment does not adorn a tale, he certainly points a moral. The moral is this; I state it from my own observation, and much could be written on the subject: those members of the Church of England, who, in early life, have been carefully educated in the Church's doctrines and principles, seldom leave the faith of their fathers. On the other hand, a barren Protestantism, which teaches little else than antag-

onism to Rome and to scepticism, is the training-school in which some weak young minds are prepared to embrace one or other of these systems in later life.

I have known of parents who, through fear lest their children should develop a tendency towards Romanism, disguised from them the doctrines in which England approaches Rome. These well-meaning but short-sighted people were unconsciously the Jesuits' *paidagogoi*. And I have known of more than one fatuous instructor of youth, exulting in their very sciolism, preparing their pupils for scientific scepticism by stating that Christianity would fall to pieces if the world had not been made in six days of twenty-four hours each.

Surely we need have no fear of the truth and the whole truth; and must we not expect that the religion which is maintained by evasion will have ill results? "Train up a child in the way he should go." Give him sound, honest, definite Church teaching, and when he is old he will not depart therefrom.

I have allowed myself to drift into a didactic and dogmatic style. With some effort I turn from it to my new Curate.

Mr. Parchment was a clergyman's son. Both his parents were extreme Evangelicals. Good, pious, God-fearing people, they impressed upon young

Peter the great lesson of the Atonement; it was his one and almost only lesson in Theology.

When he went up to Oxford, which he did with the intention of taking Holy Orders, he quickly discovered how extremely ignorant he was. Such a discovery is generally a most beneficial one, as wise old Socrates reminds us; but there are exceptions, and Mr. Parchment's case was an exception.

The Theocratic teaching of the University was a revelation to the young neophyte; he discerned that the Creed had more clauses than one; the Church was a far larger building than he had imagined; he could not compute its extent, for its limits had not been defined for him. His religious principles had been hitherto imprisoned in the sombre and narrow shrine of Calvinism; they were now let loose in a vast Cathedral.

At first the expanse awed him; the complex lights dazzled him; the grand architecture subdued and terrified him. But he gradually shook off his timidity, and allowed his soul to revel in its new-found freedom. The empty mind hungered for food; it had not been trained to distinguish between the wholesome and unwholesome, and so it ignored the truth of the adage—

> "Est modus in rebus; sunt certi denique fines
> Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum."

I do not for a moment reflect upon the training which candidates for the Ministry receive at my old University. It may be, it probably is, excellent, so far as it goes, and suitable for well-constituted minds. But it appears to me that scarcely enough care is given to those young intellects which are warped and contracted in their earlier stages, and which, so to speak, exchange the Dame School for the Lyceum with a suddenness which may be overpowering.

Such is a brief, perhaps I should add a semi-metaphorical, outline of Mr. Parchment's theological training. When he came to me he was what I may term lop-sided in his religious principles. Too much had been built on a small foundation, and in certain places the structure was in danger of toppling over.

There is much to say in favour of Mr. Parchment. He was ardent, devout, and earnest, a reader and worker. But he was a dreamer, too. His sermons were peculiar, dreamy rhapsodies seasoned with mysticism; they oscillated between a philosophical materialism and a speculative Platonism—at times they appeared to me as scarcely orthodox.

In the arrangements of his person and dress he, if I may use the expression, flirted with Rome. His face was cleanly shaved; his collar was fringed with black silk; his hat was decorated with bell-like

pendants, and his coat reached to his ankles. I believe he would have considered it a compliment had be been mistaken for a Roman Priest.

His manner and conversation indicated that he was dissatisfied; he craved for something which he could not himself explain; his thirst for the indefinite was so insatiable that he drank from every visionary brook; some of the waters were stale, and brackish, and bad for his digestion. At times he figured as a melancholy æsthete, seeking peace amid the flowers of an earthly Paradise. The Paradise was of his own making, and the flowers were reared in his imagination, and soon faded.

When, one evening, he preached a carefully prepared and laboriously delivered sermon on Apostolical Succession, his mournful face and dejected voice seemed to testify that he felt the weight of all the Apostles' hands pressing heavily upon his head.

Strangely combining with this melancholy of disposition there was a sense of humour which occasionally displayed itself in my Curate. We were passing the Dissenting Chapel together one day; Mr. Parchment stopped opposite the gate, and gravely raising his hat, solemnly repeated the words of the Litany, "From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism . . . Good Lord, deliver us."

Another incident is worth recording, as it exhibits a certain manliness in the character of my saturnine

Curate. In relating it I trust that I may not be considered over-partial to cricket. If I should be, my defence is that cricket may be regarded as not only a national, but also a clerical and even an Episcopal and *Cardinal* game. It may not be uninteresting to some to know that in the records of an early University Cricket Match, the following item occurs in the Cambridge score—C. Wordsworth c^t. Wordsworth, b^d. Manning. These great names are too well known to need comment; the last of them suggested something like a pun to me, so I have put the word *Cardinal* in italics.

But for the incident. A novel cricket match, Clergy of Blankshire *v.* Mulworth and district, was arranged to take place on the Mulworth cricket field. The clerical captain had some difficulty in getting his team together, and at the last moment included Mr. Parchment in the eleven.

The hour fixed for the match arrived; the rival combatants mustered in force, the young clergymen looked quite picturesque in their flannels, their caps and coats of many colours. All, save Mr. Parchment, who entered the field in his most clerical habiliments, and looked as if he were going to take a funeral.

The parsons won the toss, and Bill Slasher and Joe Slicer were told off to bowl. At length Mr. Parchment's turn came; his name was put down on

the fall of the seventh wicket. He took off his coat with a sigh, carefully folded it up, and emerged from the pavilion.

His appearance was greeted with a titter from the spectators, and I must admit that I smiled, for a remarkable contrast presented itself to my mind. I have stated that my former Curate, Mr. Rashleigh, walked up to the reading desk as if he were going to a wicket; my present Curate inverted this *modus eundi;* he carried his bat under his arm as if it were a Prayer Book; his hands were clasped, and he walked to the wicket as if he were going to the reading desk.

The two bowlers were holding a conversation as Mr. Parchment passed near them. Slicer sniggered, and Slasher remarked, "It ain't Mr. Rashleigh this time." Mr. Parchment heard the remark, and a feeble smile brushed his face. He quietly took his place, and asked for "guard;" then, after taking a survey of the field, he placed himself on the defensive. As he bent slightly forward the graceful curvature of his lithe frame denoted that he knew something of what is called "form." Joe Slicer winked at the umpire, and bowled a cunning slow. A sudden flash of the bat followed, then a loud cheer—the ball had been sent to the fence for five. The next ball which Mr. Parchment received he cut for four, and the bowlers ceased to grin.

But it would take me over-long to describe the rest of the innings. Suffice it to say that there was tremendous cheering; the clergy shouted like schoolboys, and Mr. Parchment carried out his bat, or rather was carried himself, with a score of fifty-one. At the close of the game the Church was victorious.

It transpired afterwards that although Mr. Parchment had not been in the Oxford eleven, he was considered the best bat of his college. I noticed that, after this event, Bill Slasher and Joe Slicer respectfully touched their hats to my Curate, which they had omitted doing before.

Would that we had some more of such cricket matches! or, indeed, anything that would have shaken my Curate out of himself and his dreary dreams. But no—he had just emerged for a few hours into the sunlight, and then retreated once more into his contemplative cell.

Gradually his sermons became more definite in their tendency. It did not require much perception to see that he sought in the direction of Rome a goal of longed-for peace. His genuflections were frequent; he advocated a *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin, of whom he spoke as the Queen of Heaven. I felt it was my duty to expostulate with him. In our succeeding conversations I gathered that he was unsettled as to the validity of Anglican Orders. But there is little good in repeating all we said, nor

is it necessary for me to assert how earnestly I endeavoured to dissuade him from drifting into a religious economy which demands the surrender of reason in matters of faith.

Possibly some conceit, mingled with bad logic, weighed with him. He may have reasoned thus: "Manning and Newman went over to Rome; they were great men. Therefore, if I go over to Rome I must be a great man." I have heard other men establishing their theories by syllogisms not in the least more cogent. Better admit that the will is stronger than argument, and that the conscience can be strangely clouded.

Not long after this Mr. Parchment left me for Rome.

Although he was thus a renegade, I still felt a sorrowful interest in him; I was allowed an occasional glimpse at his career. There is a well-known passage in Horace—

"Quia me vestigia terrent
Omnia te adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum."

This has been freely translated—"The footprints to Rome terrify me. None that go there ever return."

This is generally, but not universally true. Mr. Parchment found that Rome had her limits, in some directions narrower than those of England, and he

did *not* find there a calm resting-place for the soul. He was in time received back into the Anglican Church. When I last heard of him, he was in sole charge of a little country parish. The Church was always beautifully decorated; the music of a high order.

Perhaps he seeks, in the æstheticism of nature and in the sweet melodies of art, an echo of that peace which the world cannot give.

CHAPTER VI.

MY FIFTH CURATE—THE REV. ERNEST VERITY.

"These souls, so firmly welded on to the everyday, commonplace, conventional relations of things, cannot understand souls which place themselves in antagonism to these relations."

Richter.

"And when religious sects ran mad,
He held, in spite of all his learning,
That if a man's belief is bad,
It will not be improved by burning."

"*The Vicar*"—*Praed.*

THIS chapter will be a sad one; it is the short story of a short life. If, in some of the previous chapters, I have allowed myself to be guilty of facetiousness, this one will be utterly exempt from such.

It is with some compunction that I attempt to write it; not alone because it will stir within me tender recollections which are wet with tears, but also because it must be a confession of my own short-sightedness and want of discernment.

Perhaps some of the saddest moments of our lives are not when we reflect on the evils we have done, but when we recall opportunities of kindness and usefulness thrown away.

We Rectors may become conscious of these sins of omission in our later days. We have special opportunities of helping our younger brethren in the Ministry; yet how prone we are to ignore them!

The world of thought is advancing; we elders do not fully understand the generation which succeeds ours. It is under the influence of a *Zeit-geist* or time-spirit, unfamiliar to us and with which we have no sympathy; and so, when we are called to be a father and a friend to a younger brother, we fail.

We think we know how to deal with souls in a mass; and then, in order to humble us, some one individual soul is given to our care, and we make miserable blunders.

Perhaps I should never have learned this lesson of self-depreciation, had it not been for my association with Ernest Verity.

His was a strange history; strange in its very simpleness. The son of a tradesman, he had, by the beauty of his voice, gained the position of chorister in one of our Midland Cathedrals. Nor was his voice his only talent. His unusual ability and application to books brought him under the notice of the master

of the choir school. Here, too, he attracted the attention of one of the Canons, a learned but eccentric man, who, after a time, adopted him and sent him to Oxford.

Though scarcely fulfilling the expectations formed of him, he took a good degree; he might have taken a better one had he been less conscientious. In an Aristotle paper an ethical question was put in the form, "How would you act under the following conditions . . . ?" Young Verity gave his own opinion, *not* Aristotle's; the Examiner was annoyed, and the candidate lost a First Class.

At the University he was much influenced by the School of thought, perhaps I may call it the School of the New Oxford Movement, which has been endeavouring to reconcile the destructive processes of Biblical criticism with a firm adhesion to Church principles.

From his patron, Canon Russel, who was the broadest of Broad Churchmen, Ernest Verity had already learned something of Old Testament criticism; he had been disturbed by the confident assertions of Kuenen and Wellhausen—his anxiety was to remove from his mind any mists which might come between him and the great fundamental truths of Christianity.

Both his parents died before he was twenty-one; of humble birth and of a reserved disposition, he had

few friends, and the only person upon whom he had any claim was Canon Russel.

I now come to the time at which he became associated with me. It was shortly after I had been inducted to my present living at Lulbrook that I received a letter from Canon Russel, asking if I could give his ward a title for the Christmas Ordination. He added that as Mr. Verity was not very strong, he needed country air and exemption from over-much work of mind and body. As the work at Lulbrook was light, I agreed to have him, and after being Gospeller at the Ordination of the Bishop of *Z.*, he became my Curate.

It is but a few years since he came; it seems to me but as yesterday. He was spare in frame, and his face, which would be called a classic one, denoted intense sensitiveness and an over-wrought constitution.

Owing to his guardian's thoughtfulness, he had a well-assorted library of the latest works; he was able, owing to his allowance from Canon Russel, to have a piano in his lodging. He played exquisitely, and with that *abandon* which evidences an innate passion for music.

The chief charm in his face was its truthful, guileless expression. Even the Lulbrook boors were impressed by it. The cottagers loved his visits; in the sick room he was as gentle as a woman; when

he entered the School Room a smile of welcome lit up the children's faces.

Such was Ernest Verity; such he will ever be to my memory: a pure-minded boy; nay, less and more than that—a *child*.

I can scarcely go on with my narrative; for now I can perceive that from the first there was a shadow of what afterwards resulted in misconceptions and mistakes.

His conversations, as well as his sermons, were thoughtful; they exhibited decided ability and a considerable range of careful reading. They implied, by what was left unsaid more than by what was said, a want of orthodoxy regarding Holy Writ. At first I paid little heed to his utterances; indeed I regarded them as among the phases of doubt and debate through which certain intellectual minds have to make their way.

He had been with us but a few months when a great trial befell him. Canon Russel, who had always led him to consider himself his heir, died suddenly, without having made a will, and his property passed to a distant relative. For the sympathy which my wife and myself showed him the young clergyman, left so alone in the world, expressed in his own quiet way a deep and heartfelt gratitude.

I had trusted that out of this sorrow there might

spring up a closer union of feeling between us. Here I was disappointed. A certain respectful reserve on his part, a want of penetration on mine, kept us apart. I also became more anxious about his views. He put questions to me which to my thinking connoted a still greater deviation from the beaten track of orthodoxy. Some of these questions were too deep for me to answer, and when I eluded them by resorting to a truism he appeared to be disappointed, and driven still farther back upon himself and his books.

Thinking that it would be well for him to mix more in the society of our neighbouring clergy, I induced him to join the clerical meetings of our Rural Deanery, which were held once a month. At these meetings papers were read—generally by the younger members—and discussions followed.

Hitherto the discussions had been of the most amicable description; the disputants had only imaginary opponents; the remarks never entered into doubtful ground.

At this time, however, a subject presented itself—one which had begun to occupy men's thoughts: namely, What is the meaning of Inspiration as it bears on the Holy Scriptures? As Mr. Verity had clearly expressed himself on some question of debate, he was asked to write a paper on the subject referred to. He assented with some diffidence.

I can give but a very succinct *résumé* of the paper, which was evidently the result of deep research, and carefully prepared :—

In maintaining the Divine element of Scripture, men had come to deny the human element. The inevitable consequence was that keen scrutiny brought to light again the undeniable humanity, and exaggerated it to the point of questioning the Divinity. He entered a protest against the rigid theories of Inspiration, which, vainly attempting to ward off criticism, only provoked it the more. He pointed out the danger of confusing merely literary questions with the Christian Faith, till fearless enquiry was almost of necessity regarded as hostile attack. He showed how severe some of the attacks of the more recent criticism really were, and how by their industry the critics put us to shame. He was inclined to admit many of their positions, and pleaded for patient study.

A painful silence followed the reading of the paper. This was at length broken by Mr. Langsyne, our Rural Dean. He commenced in language which denoted suppressed anger: he went on in cutting tones, he finished in righteous indignation. Had we not had sufficient warning in the case of Bishop Colenso? Dare we tamper with the outworks of our Faith? If they were surrendered, what would become of the shrine itself? If mistakes were

admitted in the chronology of the Old Testament, where then were type and shadow and prophecy? If these, again, were annihilated, what guarantee could we have of the great Truth to which they pointed?

Others followed in a similar strain; almost unanimously, the paper was condemned as adverse to orthodoxy, and—I blush to say it—the writer was attacked for making statements unworthy of a clergyman.

Ernest Verity rose to reply. He quivered as if in pain. Slowly at first, but gaining energy as he went on, he replied to the attacks. He asked wherein he had been erroneous? Surely they would not prejudge the case by attributing dishonesty to him. Did they suppose the honour of God could be served by concealment or evasion? It was his desire, far from shattering the bulwarks—as had been insinuated—to discover where they had been weakened through ignorance or neglect, then to gain a clear view of them and to strengthen them.

It was of no use. Most of us were entirely ignorant of the controversy; we did not care to lay aside our rusty weapons of defence when we had not the new ones to replace them.

This unfortunate clerical meeting had a most depressing effect upon my young Curate: he never got over it. He was driven back, more than ever,

on himself and his studies. Dependent now upon his profession, he was led into the most painful self-scrutiny as to his motives. He began to imagine that he was untrue to the principles of the Church. As he was still in Deacons' Orders, he might change his profession.

He expressed these feelings to me in subsequent conversations, and finally sent in his resignation. Why did I accept it? Why did I let him go? Why did I not obey the impulse which rushed over me, and take him to my heart? Alas! how many Whys there are in this world!

I do not attempt to exonerate myself, but I believe that Mr. Langsyne influenced me. He said it was my duty to uphold the Truth; that it was right for the young man to resign a profession upon the limits of which he encroached; and that, owing to his ability, he would doubtless distinguish himself in some other calling.

And so Ernest Verity departed, and I lost a Curate who, I discovered too late, was true, fearless, and loving—whose greatest fault was a painful sensitiveness, partially, no doubt, resulting from his knowledge of his humble origin. Humility and pride are sometimes strangely blended, and sensitiveness is the feeble barrier of both.

* * * * *

Two years ago I received a parcel containing a

few relics which were to be distributed among the poor of my parish. On enquiries I found out how he had laid down his life. Without means, without friends, without prospects, he had made his way to London. There, earning a bare existence by his pen, he had devoted the whole of his spare time to teaching the Arabs of a low slum in our great city. Amid unhealthy surroundings he had worked for the Love of God, in the power of the Faith of Christ, till he was called home.

Few of his books were left. Most of them had been sacrificed to buy little luxuries for the poor. But his little manuscript book of devotions was there—in it the names of those who had been in trouble, and of some who had been bitter in their attacks upon him. Against my name was a note, gratefully recalling my kindness to him.

* * * * *

I grew some years older on the day I learned these things. When I managed to break it all to my wife, she left the room, unable to speak. When I told Langsyne about it, he turned away to hide his tears.

But why dwell on these sad memories! As I write, a multitude of complex thoughts are stirred within my soul.

How heedful should we be in dealing with minds of finely moulded texture: how careful lest an over-

confident zeal should shrivel into the bitterness of bigotry!

And as to Biblical criticism.—Upon what did Christ found His Church? Not on prophecy, not on inspiration, but "upon this Rock"—the confession of His Divinity.

If our faith rests firmly on that Rock, does it matter whether the world was made in six days or in six æons? Whether Deuteronomy was written by Moses or Jeremiah; or the Chronicles years after the marginal date? Does it matter whether Paul, or Apollos, or Barnabas, or Ignatius wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews?

Biblical criticism has strengthened the Church's position; it has called out warriors on the ramparts of Zion; so its very opposition has helped to confirm the Gospel narrative. It has brushed away mists; it has exhibited in clearer light all that we hold dearest, all that we need to know—it has brought us to rest our hopes, not on doubtful dates, but on the unchanging Truth.

CHAPTER VII.

PARVA IN PARVO.

"Happy are they that hear their own detractions, and can put them to mending."—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

BESIDES my regularly licensed Curates, who stayed for a longer or shorter time, I have had clergymen, both at Mulworth and Lulbrook, to take occasional duty. These latter, as well as some of my Curates, do not claim, from my experience of them, any lengthy notice.

They, however, helped to extend my knowledge of the members of my own profession. In this chapter I intend to draw from that knowledge somewhat promiscuously, that is, I shall allow my memory to flit backwards, and just touch upon those who worked with me, without attempting to enter minutely into details. Perhaps I shall generalise, and in some cases individualise ; and it is possible that as certain of these quickly-moving forms cross my memory's vision, they may call out an occasional reflection or apostrophe.

In the foregoing chapters I have exhibited a few peculiarities which may be observable in Curates as in other men. These I shall endeavour not to recall again.

In extending the roll of the small imperfections or weaknesses which young clergymen may betray, I trust my reader will understand that it is by no means implied that such imperfections are by any means universal, or even general. They are scattered about, like dust on a coat. Specks of dust may rest on a good coat; so, in many respects, those who evidence some small faults may be very free from graver ones.

It will be my simplest plan, first to collect some of these irregularly-scattered faults, and jot them down without mentioning names; and afterwards, should occasion require, to specify a few individuals and their peculiar shortcomings.

Preaching is decidedly an important item in a clergyman's duties. As books have been written on the art of preaching, and as this book is not written on that art, I shall say little about it. But I would mention one fault into which young clergymen are here liable to fall, namely, the assumption of an air of pomposity which suggests that they have a considerable opinion of their own powers. Not infrequently united with this is an over-florid style and an effort to make the peroration of the

sermon very magniloquent. To the pomposity and the magniloquence earnestness and sense are likely to be sacrificed. This kind of fault generally decreases as age advances.

A desire for admiration is a natural and not uncommon failing—it is very perceptible to a man's hearers—it sometimes increases as age advances.

In a young clergyman's social intercourse with the laity, a manifestation of what I may term professional pride is to be deplored. I am glad to say that the more refined among my Curates were free from this self-assertiveness. I have noticed that with this tendency there is often united a peculiarity —scarcely worth mentioning perhaps, although it has always irritated me; I mean a "clerical laugh" which consists of a cachinnation made by a rapid and jerky inhaling of the breath—it is not, however, *inspiring;* it is usually accompanied by a fierce rubbing of the hands at one's own feeble joke. I beg to state that I did not rub my hands when I italicised *inspiring*.

A want of consideration for other people's feelings and sentiments is not unfrequently noticeable in the young clergyman's conversation, particularly on theoretical questions of a religious nature. This arises, not from innate discourtesy or want of breeding, so much as from a dogmatic, lay-down-

the-law manner conferred by a consciousness of professional importance.

If I may do so, I should recommend young clergymen to avoid gregariousness in public. It is anything but a pleasing sight, at a social gathering, to observe a number of Curates huddled together with their hands behind their backs. We are in the world, and in its good and proper sense it is well to be men of the world, helping to refine it.

Some young clergymen are easily depressed. This is a pity; it argues a want of hopefulness and trust.

There is a particular of a different bearing which I would here note. It is a caution to young clergymen to be very careful in expressing themselves on points of doctrine: I do not refer to disputed points. I mention this because one of my Curates preached a sermon on Christmas Day which verged on Apollinarianism; and another, on Trinity Sunday, really drifted into Sabellianism. They did no harm I think, for probably no one except myself noticed the discrepancies.

I find that this categorising of faults and warnings is not to my taste, so I proceed to notice a few chance individuals.

If Mr. Rashleigh be accepted as a representative of the self-confident chatterbox, I had another Curate, his exact opposite in this respect. Poor Mr. Sayce! When he came in of an evening, he

bored the life out of me. He would sit on the chair opposite, with his hands on his knees and his eyes fixed on mine as if I were Solomon. He would utter but the monosyllable "Yes" the whole evening.

Mr. Sayce reminded me of the clergyman who, on being asked by his *in prospectu* Rector what were his views, replied, with a bow, "My views, Sir, are those of my Rector." I was glad when Mr. Sayce was appointed to a Mastership in a Grammar School.

With some reluctance, I introduce the subject of love as it appertains to fair spinsters and unmarried Curates. My apology for doing so is that I would say a word on behalf of the Curates. On this tender ground they are often blamed, more often ridiculed, and although, as a rule, I have found them to be circumspect, still they do sometimes make sad mistakes in their wooings and matrimonial engagements.

Much allowance should be made for them. Curates belong to a social species; they *will* go, like other young men, where girls are. In small towns or country parishes they have little chance of mixing in the society of educated young ladies. Their world becomes a small one; their ideals of womanhood are reduced in proportion; the visible realities are confined to the *bourgeois* and downwards. They stop to tea and supper at a friendly farmer's or trader's house: by-and-bye they discover themselves saying soft, half-meaning things to Mary Jane or

Hannah. The case proceeds in the old, old way: it results in an unpleasant *dénouement* or a wife.

I recall two episodes which caused me some anxiety and worry.

The Rev. Valentine Spooney, one of my Mulworth Curates, managed somehow to pay attention to two girls at the same time: one, the daughter of Mr. Pickle, our chemist; the other, of Mr. Skew, a large ironmonger.

For a time all went well. Mr. Spooney paid visits pretty often at both places; the girls were nice enough in their way; he seemed to like one as well as the other: perhaps the same soft sayings did for both. Unfortunately, old Pickle and old Skew met one Sunday afternoon and had a talk; they parted rather angrily. Skew went home, but Pickle proceeded to Mr. Spooney's lodgings. He shouted out my Curate's name. Spooney, who was reading over his sermon, threw up the sash, and Pickle bombarded him with "a piece of his mind." Half the people in the street heard the cannonade, and I should fancy, from what I was told afterwards, that Mr. Pickle must have had a very large mind, if that were only a piece of it.

About half an hour before evensong, and under cover of the darkness, Mr. Spooney ran in to me. His nerves were shattered; he could not preach, nor attend Church that evening: so I had to fish

out an old sermon, which happened to be on "The restraint of the tongue." Pickle and Skew were at Church, and I trust they derived benefit from my discourse. Poor Spooney took the first train the following morning.

I may as well finish the story. My Curate returned two years afterwards, and Miss Pickle became Mrs. Spooney.

The other episode occurred here in Lulbrook. My Curate, Mr. Nibbler, was most frequent in his visits to the infant school. For a time I rejoiced at his zeal in teaching the little ones. Another reason transpired when it was too late: he had engaged himself to the schoolmistress, a young and rather pretty woman. Mr. Nibbler belonged to a good family. When his aunt, Lady N., heard of the affair she came at once to Lulbrook. She resorted to arguments, threats, and pleadings, and as a last resource to bribery; she told her nephew she would give the girl £2,000 if he broke off the match. It was all to no purpose. Her Ladyship swept away in a storm, a portion of which broke upon the Rectory and put my wife in a flutter for the rest of the day.

Mr. Nibbler married the schoolmistress. They are very poor; and, I fear, he is ostracised from the society of his relations.

Although it may exhibit me in a somewhat

ludicrous position I must relate the following instance as a warning to my brother Rectors:—

At one time, during my tenure of S. Peter's, Mulworth, I required help for three months. A young man, calling himself the Rev. Ferdinand Lefanue, and stating that he had come over from Canada for his holiday, applied for the work. He supplied me with excellent testimonials, and came to S. Peter's. He quickly set about canvassing for a mission in Canada. Lady Scratcham took a great interest in him, invited him to lunch, found him to be a very charming man, and gave him five pounds. Besides this he raised a considerable sum. At his request I paid him his three months' stipend in advance.

He left before the end of the first month. I afterwards learned that his sudden departure was owing to his fear of the police; he was not a clergyman, but a ticket-of-leave man.

I meant this chapter to be a short one, so I bring it to a close. I am not sorry to have done with it. It is headed "Parva in parvo"—it treats of little things in a little space. I do not care about little things; so I allow my mind to rise to another and, I trust, more sententious chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT I WOULD LIKE MY CURATE TO BE.

"Non vox sed votum; non chordula musica sed cor;
Non cantans sed amans cantat in aure Dei."

S. Augustine.

"Be but duteous, and true preferment shall tender itself to thee."

Cymbeline.

I AM no idealist; that is to say, I do not believe it possible to find all one wants in another man—indeed, it would be difficult to state all that one does want.

Perfection is hard, nay, impossible, to define, and why? Because perfection admits of an infinite number of degrees. Even supposing that man had never "gone far from original righteousness," still the gradation in human perfection, within its earthly limits, would remain: the range from the perfection of the child to that of the grown man would be considerable.

But without entering the field of metaphysics, even that portion of it which is within the reach of speculation, my experience (and experience is a

realising factor) has suggested to me that it is well-nigh impossible to find any two men who could travel from one end to the other of life's road in a harmony of feeling and aspiration which would defy at least an occasional dissonance.

We must not expect, then, to find perfection in Curates, nor a complete unanimity always existing between them and their Rectors. Bishops are not perfect—they are not all unanimous. It would be absurd to expect unanimity on the Episcopal bench; it would be chimerical to expect it among the lower Clergy.

I have already admitted that I made a grave mistake with regard to one of my Curates. Could I lay that aside from my memory, I honestly think that I am not over-scrupulous in my conception of what a Curate should be; and I may say, without affectation, that as some of my Curates were tolerably well satisfied with their Rector, so he was tolerably well satisfied with them.

Now, in preparing to give my impression of what a Curate should be, more than one difficulty presents itself. In the first place, other Rectors may not resemble me, and so may not agree with my opinion. And then again, is it not the case, so strangely are we constituted, that two excellent, earnest, religious men may not be able to get on together as Rector and Curate? Granting, then,

that one could mould a die for a perfect Rector and another for a perfect Curate, the question is, Would they be complementary?

However, without further preface to this chapter, I shall put down some characteristics. If I found a Curate in whom these were harmoniously combined and consolidated, perhaps he would satisfy me: after all, perhaps not.

In the following catalogue, I shall make no allusion to the private life of prayer. Such is taken for granted —without this the others would be of little value.

I should like my Curate to have these qualifications:—

1. His heart in the work. I start with the shrine of our being. The heart is a higher measure than the mind. Before his ordination Lacordaire wrote, "I have a very religious soul, and a very sceptical mind; but as it is in the nature of the mind to yield to the soul, probably some day I shall be a Christian." It is true that I have known young men, who embraced the Priesthood as a profession, and as little else, manifesting afterwards not only a deep devotion, but a deep love in the work of the ministry. But such cases are by no means general.

2. That he be clever and well-educated. The mind should take a prominent part. In these days especially we need young men, not only devoted and earnest, but of profound thought and intelligence.

It is a pitiful thing to see a clergyman beaten or puzzled by the sophistry of an opponent who has made it his speciality to undermine the cause of religion. Questions have to be grasped, arguments to be met face to face—evasion will not do. It is not, of course, to be expected that all our young clergymen should be, mentally speaking, mighty men of war. But it is possible for them to keep up their reading and their *thinking*, and to have whatever defensive weapons they are furnished with clean and bright, ready for the battle.

I have dwelt on this subject because I have seen religion suffer through the ignorance of a clerical dunce.

3. That he be free from a wish to be popular. There are many instances I could quote, showing how popular clergymen "filled their churches"—they emptied them by leaving; their work was built on sand (perhaps I should say on bubbles). On the other hand, I have known of unpopular men, who laboured and left, but whose *works followed them.*

There is, however, a little caution to be noted here. Indifference to popularity does not mean indifference to the claims of our people. Besides, if pushed to an extreme, an ignoring of popularity may degenerate into that fanaticism, the self-gratulation of being a martyr, which really consists in unnecessarily offending people.

4. To be a friend to the *rich* as well as to the poor. Both classes need his spiritual counsel. He need not be obsequious to the former class; nor is it necessary to make himself cheap to the latter. How many clergymen who read the Bible in the cottage never say a word about spiritual religion in a rich man's house. We must remember that the Master had friends among the rich, and He preached to them. He entertained Nicodemus and instructed him; He supped with Simon the Pharisee and rebuked him.

5. I trust it is not necessary for me to say that I would have my Curate *natural*, free from affectation, mannerism, servility, and all those blemishes which are excrescences on manliness.

6. That, if possible, he be a graduate of one of our Universities. Here I would not for a moment disparage our Theological Colleges. I have met with most excellent men—gentlemen—who were trained at these Colleges. My reason for mentioning this qualification is that I have noticed a certain self-sufficiency about some *alumni* of Theological Colleges. Perhaps they were very proud of having distinguished themselves in a small way and against few rivals. The conceit is generally knocked out of a young fellow at the University, unless he be a great fool. There, he finds himself beaten at all points, on land and water, in the schools and at

the sports. If not beaten, if he win all the big Scholarships at Oxford, and come out a double first, or if he be Senior Wrangler and Senior Classic combined at Cambridge, then he is too great a man to be conceited.

7. That he be an honour man. Number 2 partly gives my reason for this. University training is not by any means everything, but it is something.

I cannot refrain here from telling a little anecdote about the great Bishop Wilberforce. It may be an old one, and I dread lest it should be so, but I have only just heard it. A candidate for Ordination was being examined. The Bishop heard him reading the Greek Testament, and was much annoyed at the young man's pronunciation. He asked him rather crossly, "Where did you learn Greek, Sir?" "At Athens, my Lord," was the reply.

8. As a preacher, I should like him to be simple and erudite—these can be combined. The following quotation has pleased me, "The ideal sermon is an ethical translation of supernatural truths from the language of scientific dogma into forms convenient for daily practice."

9. That he be cheerful, contented, unsuspicious, and a friend of his Rector.

10. That he be fearless in stating his opinions, if he firmly holds them: this without ostentation or obtrusiveness.

11. That he convey the impression that he not only says what he feels, but also feels what he says. Children, especially, are quick to discern when the feeling and saying are not in unison. I knew a little girl who, after hearing a clergyman preach on Christ's sympathy, said, "He says it, but I don't feel he feels it."

12. I hope I should be satisfied with a Curate who was imbued with all the virtues expressed in the beginning of the fifth of S. Matthew, the thirteenth of First Corinthians, and the twenty-second and twenty-third verses of the Epistle to the Galatians.

But I branch off from catalogue and synopsis. My readers, especially among the clergy, may say that my suggestions are superfluous, that they are all recognised and accepted.

And yet I would dwell, a little at length, on two characteristics, which are essential to a clergyman's usefulness, and which, although they be theoretically recognised, are not always observed in the practical life of clergymen, whether they be Bishops, Rectors, or Curates. I mean humility and zeal.

These two virtues, although at first sight the resemblance may not appear striking, are nearly related: we might call them brother and sister, at all events they are good friends, and when they nestle in the inner shrine of the same tabernacle they give it a wonderful lustre.

Humility, what is it? If I may personify, I should call her a quiet gentlewoman who is very often misunderstood, who is the companion of the three graces, and who helps a man to be a *gentleman*. Without her, the great man sometimes appears small: with her the small man looks bigger. It is she that gives a refining touch to love's work, and helps love to teach the soul the true meaning of altruism.

But why need I eulogise Humility, seeing that it is written "I am meek and lowly of heart," the words of Him—

"The first true Gentleman that ever breathed."

And *Z*eal. Yes, *Z*eal is a *man*, and a noble-looking fellow he is, too, and the more I look at him the more he resembles Humility. They have the same expressive features; the difference is, that while hers are of Grecian type, his are decidedly Roman.

*Z*eal—that rare and precious gift which has made men heroes. What a glorious attribute in the young officer of the Church Militant Army! It draws him away from the world and yet to the world, without spoiling him; it whets his sword and nerves his arm; it helps him to put self aside, and yet be no Stoic; it makes him an orator both outside and inside the pulpit; it endows him not only with what Cicero calls a *sermo corporis*, but also with a *sermo*

spiritûs; his words are not his own—they are ordinary English words, it may be, but they have caught fire, because the thoughts behind them are sparks which human necessity has struck from the red-hot Anvil of the Divine Pleroma. Such a man has power, a mighty power to win men; but as soon as he becomes aware of his power there is danger of his losing it. I recall the noble lines—

> "They out-talked thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee!
> Better men fared thus before thee;
> Fired their ringing shot and pass'd,
> Hotly charged—and sank at last.
>
> Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
> Let the victors, when they come,
> When the forts of folly fall,
> Find thy body by the wall."

I would ask a Curate desiring preferment, Have you such zeal as these words suggest? If so, would you take this quiet living of Lulbrook in exchange for the work you might make for yourself amid the masses of human souls? If you would, then give me your youth, your strength and your zeal, and I will hand you over the living.

It is nearly time for me to close. I have not been visiting in the parish much lately, and, I must confess it, I preached old sermons on the last five

Sundays. I must try and write a fresh one for next Sunday, perhaps it will be on *Zeal.*

Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἤδη ὥρα ἀπιέναι—that is, I must take my hat and stick and go out to the parish. Good-bye, my friends, to whom I dedicate this book. If I have, inadvertently, hurt or wounded any of you, forgive me: I did not mean to do so. If I have exposed some of our failings, it will do no harm. If I ever become aware that my suggestions have helped any of you I shall rejoice. If, perchance, I have made you smile, why, I have smiled too; and let us remember the saying—

"Quid vetat dicere verum
Etiam ridentem?"

I still linger at my desk; my pen wants to go on; it seems to whisper to me, "You have something more to say!" Let it, then, be to "My Curates," past, present, future, real and imaginary. Forgive, if, as these conjured memories pass away, the parson replaces the historian, the preacher the scribe. The words, the deeds of great men rush upon me—

"Duty!" exclaims Kant, "wondrous thought, that workest neither by fond insinuation, flattery, nor by any threat, but merely by holding up thy naked 'law in the soul,' and so extorting for thyself always reverence, if not always obedience; before whom all appetites are dumb, however secretly they rebel; *whence thy original.*"

Yes, if Duty be the soldier's watchword, let it be the clergyman's too.

You look forward to preferment, possibly, some of you, for the fine linen of the Episcopate. Remember the only garment for which S. Paul asked; the cloak that he left behind him at Troas. Are you better than was he? Do you want more than did he?

And what are all the honours of life here compared with one act of self-sacrificing kindness? What the laurels of your profession, compared with the deep peace of helping one soul towards God? What the praise of men to the joy of giving a drop of cold water in the name of a disciple?

True to your great responsibility, you may be called to patience, to endurance, to neglect and omission—but *Preferment will come*—it may be delayed till "these shadows flee away."

There are jars and jolts in our profession; mistakes, misconceptions, injustice; there is the trial that you feel you could be more useful if more independent. What are all these but "broken syllables in the great poem of our redeemed humanity?"

A pamphlet is open before me; I see there soul-stirring words; they are those of one who never sought preferment, and only accepted it when the sense of duty forced it on him. I had once the

great honour to know him: he has lately gone to his rest, but his words remain, and I give them, for they are worth reading—

"What, after all, is the individual life in the history of the Church? Men may come and men may go; individual lives float down like straws on the surface of the waters till they are lost in the ocean of Eternity; but the broad, mighty, rolling stream of the Church itself—the cleansing, purifying, fertilising tide of the river of God flows on for ever and ever."

They recall yet another quotation—

"Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
To the golden gate and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar;
Till *I lose myself* in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
Undefiled for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child."

It is later than I supposed. There is no time to visit in the parish to-day; but I must begin my sermon at once. Good-bye.

THE END.

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